

## **Section 2-Improving School Management**

**Updated through March 31, 2004**

***Objective: Improvements in school performance around selected policy and education interventions***

***Strategic Area: Improving school management***

### **Description**

Asthma accounts for over 10 million missed school days per year nationwide. Schools struggle both with creating an environment that minimizes asthma triggers and also with day-to-day management of students with asthma. Team Asthma Goes to School (TAGS) is an AAA-funded program designed to raise asthma awareness and provide asthma management support to school staff. It is a consultative model designed to connect school personnel and families with information, experts, programs, and curricula that can help with the clinical and environmental aspects of asthma management. The AAA Outreach Coordinator receives calls from school personnel and links them with the appropriate services, offered by members of the KCAF on a voluntary basis. It is staffed by the chair of the KCAF Schools committee and the KCAF Outreach Coordinator. TAGS also provides linkages for school personnel to local organizations or agencies that offer appropriate services such as the American Lung Association or the Environmental Protection Agency's Indoor Air Quality services.

During the summer of 2003, AAA staff provided school nurses (including those in school-based teen health clinics) in the Highline, Tukwila, Renton and Seattle districts with an overview of TAGS and a packet of information with contact information and several examples of how TAGS services can be utilized. In addition, the American Lung Association of Washington began distributing Asthma Management in the Educational Setting (AMES), a manual that assists school personnel in minimizing environmental triggers and improving the management of students with asthma.

During 2003 school district budget cuts resulted in school nurse FTE reductions. As a result, TAGS promotion was expanded to school personnel other than nurses including health educators, family support workers (FSW), and teachers, all of whom work with children with asthma. AAA staff and Schools Committee members organized two [in-service trainings for schoolteachers](#), health educators, and [FSWs](#). In addition, they held an in-service training for Seattle Public School nurses. Through these efforts, and through dissemination of newly developed posters and fliers, AAA staff have recruited students from schools for the AAA CHW intervention.

### **Other Activities:**

In 2003 the Schools Committee began considering incorporating the Tools for Schools (TFS) indoor air quality program developed by the US Environmental Protection agency into the menu of TAGS services. Information about Tools for Schools can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/schools/>. 4 schools in the AAA target area had TFS

assessments. KCAF is considering providing follow-up visits to those schools to ensure staff have access to support and training related to any issues identified in the assessment. In addition, the KCAF commissioned an asthma play for middle school students. It was performed in three schools in the AAA target area and will likely continue into 2004.

### **Progress**

The primary process measures for the AAA schools intervention involve the number and type of consultations and activities offered to school personnel, parents, and students. Outcome measures are divided into two broad areas: changes in policies and practices, and improved processes of care for children with asthma.

### **Process Measures**

<b><i>Process objective</i></b>	<b><i>Status/ Indicators</i></b>	<b><i>Next steps</i></b>
Consultations are performed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 requests for assistance from school personnel</li> <li>• 2 presentations made to parents and personnel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue distributing TAGS and KCAF posters and flyers promoting TAGS consultative services</li> </ul>
Activities and services are implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KCAF posters and fliers developed and disseminated throughout schools</li> <li>• Asthma play performed in 3 middle schools – 500 students attended</li> <li>• 2 continuing education classes held for teachers, health educators, and family support workers – 34 attendees</li> <li>• 1 resource training fair for Seattle Public School Nurses - 60 attendees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A proposal to expand services to include use of Tools for Schools, an indoor air quality program from EPA is under review</li> </ul>
AMES manual is distributed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 169 manuals distributed within AAA target area</li> <li>• AMES manual now available on-line and no longer possible to track dissemination</li> </ul>	

### **Outcome Measures**

<b><i>Outcome objective</i></b>	<b><i>Status/ Indicators</i></b>	<b><i>Next steps</i></b>
Improved policies and practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Description and impact of policies addressed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools committee will emphasize strategies that impact policy and processes in 2004</li> <li>• Sustainability and expansion of TAGS/schools interventions including policy and practices</li> </ul>

		will be transitioned into STEPS intervention
Improved processes of care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Description of improved processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools committee will emphasize strategies that impact policy and processes in 2004</li> </ul>
Improved attendance rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2001-02 - Seattle Public Schools: 5.5% absenteeism rate for children diagnosed with asthma</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Calculate 2002-03 absenteeism rate</li> </ul>

## Successes, Challenges, and Lessons Learned

### Successes:

- Developed TAGS model and a triaging system.** KCAF staff utilized a participatory approach to developing the consultative model for working with schools. Through the development of TAGS, agencies and organizations in King County offered their asthma expertise to any school personnel or parents who called in for assistance. For example, links to an indoor air quality program offered by Public Health-Seattle King County (PH-SKC), researchers from the University of Washington, the American Lung Association of Washington, the Allergy and Asthma Foundation of Washington, and several asthma clinicians were established. Through TAGS, a triaging system that connected these agencies and individuals to community members was developed that allowed one centralized office to take and disperse requests for services/assistance.
- Assembled and distributed a TAGS Information Kit.** Prior to the start of the 2003 school year, TAGS program developers created a comprehensive information kit that included brochures, flyers, and a letter of explanation. They attended several school nursing staff meetings in the Highline, Seattle, Tukwila and Renton districts where they distributed the kits and gave an overview of the consultative model and described how to utilize TAGS services. Distributing the kits created new relationships and channels of communication with nurses and increased their asthma awareness.
- Sponsored asthma presentations for parents and school staff/administrators.** Upon request, TAGS connected both parents and school staff with local health care providers who offered basic asthma education on asthma. In addition, schools requested booths at school health and wellness fairs, one school nurse called for assistance in having a home environmental assessment conducted, and one school district requested information about mold.
- Developed and offered three continuing education/in-service training courses targeting teachers, family support workers (FSWs), health educators, and Seattle school nurses.** The courses highlighted basic asthma education, described roles personnel play, and described the KCAF/TAGS triage service.
- Created a media package to raise awareness of school-related asthma issues.** The Schools Committee, with the assistance of a public relations specialist at PH-

SKC, developed a media package to raise awareness about asthma in general and the specific challenges that face schools in managing children with asthma. The public relations specialist submitted the package to local newspapers.

- **Developed and distributed posters and fliers** within schools and school-based health clinics communicating the services offered by the KCAF.
- **AMES Manual Distribution.** KCAF has distributed “Asthma Management Education in the Schools” (AMES) manuals to over 169 schools within the Highline and Seattle School districts. The manual provides detailed information for school administrators on how to create schools that are environmentally healthy and policies that promote effective management of childhood asthma. The manual includes a checklist for improvements and walks administrators step by step through each recommendation. The American Lung Association of Washington, a member of the KCAF, distributes this manual. The manual is available on the ALA website ([http://www.alaw.org/childhood\\_asthma/ames](http://www.alaw.org/childhood_asthma/ames)).
- **Developed and presented an asthma play** to middle school students at three schools within the AAA target area.

#### **Challenges/Lessons Learned:**

- **School nurse FTE reductions.** The Seattle Public School District will eliminate several nursing positions in 2004. This will require a change in school outreach strategy.

#### ***How Addressed/Lessons Learned:***

**Developed continuing education/in-service training.** The Schools Committee began considering other audiences to proactively promote TAGS to such as parents, administrators, families, physical educators, and health instructors. The committee developed two continuing education classes for teachers, health educators, and family support workers as a way to reach out to school personnel other than nurses.

- **TAGS services are not fully utilized.** Since its conception, 7 requests have been made for TAGS services. Changing how TAGS is promoted and expanding existing services may stimulate use. However, school personnel remain overwhelmed with issues perceived as more pressing than asthma, which may affect TAGS service utilization.

#### ***How Addressed/Lessons Learned:***

**Developed and disseminated new promotional materials.** Newly designed posters and fliers promote TAGS as well as all the other services offered through KCAF. These have been distributed throughout schools in the target area.

**Considered expanding services to include other interventions.** The Schools Committee is considering developing a program that will utilize a school indoor air quality program developed by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This would involve a collaborative effort with EPA. Information about Tools for Schools can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/schools/>.

- **Resources for TAGS staffing, expansion, and making improvements were limited.** Funding limitations made it difficult to develop a more proactive schools intervention that would have greater impact than the existing consultative model.

***How Addressed/Lessons Learned:***

**Launching and expanding the schools intervention required more resources than originally allocated.** Proposed additional resources include a full-time staff person dedicated to school asthma activities and launching a pilot program to better assess needs and implementation strategies.

- **Health topics in the school setting are political.** Nurses see themselves as the gatekeepers of health issues at school.

***How Addressed/Lessons Learned:***

Working with nurses and school personnel requires political caution and careful thought about proposed methods and activities.